

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 5-16, add new claims 17-28 and replace claims 1 and 2 with the following amended claims. Changes made to the amended claims are shown in the attached "Marked-Up Version of the Amended Claims.

1. (Once Amended) An isolated polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of:
 - (a) a polynucleotide comprising the protein coding region of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1,
 - (b) a polynucleotide encoding a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2,
 - (c) a polynucleotide encoding a protein that (i) comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 in which one or more amino acids have been substituted, deleted, inserted, and/or added, wherein the overall percentage of mutations is typically 10% or less, and (ii) is functionally equivalent to the protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, and,
 - (d) a polynucleotide that (i) hybridizes to a polynucleotide comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 under stringent conditions, and (ii) encodes a protein functionally equivalent to the protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.
2. (Once Amended) A polynucleotide encoding a partial peptide of a protein encoded by a polynucleotide according to claim 1, wherein said partial peptide (a) comprises said protein in which a signal peptide has been removed, or (b) is used to provide a specific antibody against said whole protein.
17. (New) A transformant harboring a polynucleotide according to claims 1 or 2.
18. (New) A method for producing a protein comprising culturing the transformant according to claim 17 and recovering the expression product.

19. (New) An antibody against the protein according to claim 3.
20. (New) An immunological method for assaying the protein according to claim 3, wherein said method comprises the step of detecting an immunological reaction between the protein and an antibody against the protein.
21. (New) A polynucleotide comprising at least 15 nucleotides, wherein said polynucleotide comprises a nucleotide sequence complementary to a polynucleotide according to claim 1, or to a complementary strand thereof, and the polynucleotide sequence is at least 15 nucleotides long.
22. (New) A primer for synthesizing a polynucleotide according to claim 1, wherein the primer comprises a nucleotide sequence complementary to said polynucleotide, or to a complementary strand thereof, and the polynucleotide sequence is at least 15 nucleotides long.
23. (New) A probe for detecting a polynucleotide according to claim 1, wherein the probe comprises a nucleotide sequence complementary to said polynucleotide, or to a complementary strand thereof.
24. (New) An antisense DNA against a polynucleotide according to claim 1, or a portion thereof.
25. (New) A method of screening for a compound that binds to the protein according to claim 3, wherein said method comprises the steps of:
 - (a) contacting the protein with a test sample containing at least one compound and,
 - (b) selecting the compound that binds to the protein.
26. (New) A compound isolated by a method of claim 25.

27. (New) A method of screening for a compound that regulates the incorporation of a long chain fatty acid to a cell expressing the protein according to claim 3, wherein said method comprises the steps of:

- (a) contacting the cell with a labeled long chain fatty acid and a test sample containing at least one compound, and incubating the mixture,
- (b) measuring the activity of incorporating the long chain fatty acid into the cell, and,
- (c) selecting the compound that regulates the incorporation activity by comparing the activity measured in step (b) with the activity measured in the absence of the compound.

28. (New) A compound isolated by the method of claim 27.